

Into the light of learning...



**National Association for Retarded Children**  
The Greater Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area  
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# *Retarded Children & Adults Can be Helped*

Retarded individuals today attain many degrees of development and independence once considered impossible. We have learned how to prevent many of the causes of mental retardation — encouraging hope that continued research will lead to further prevention and understanding.

Given the help they require, most of the six million mentally retarded Americans are able to become happy, useful, contributing men and women.

*The retarded CAN be helped—  
the retarded ARE being helped.*

## ***What Is Mental Retardation?***

In non-technical terms, the mentally retarded person is one who, from childhood, matures at a below-average rate and experiences unusual difficulty in learning, social adjustment and economic productivity.

Mental retardation afflicts three percent of our population. It is four times as common as rheumatic heart, nine times more prevalent than cerebral palsy, affects fifteen times more people than total blindness (the other major permanent handicaps). It disables ten times as many children and adults as polio did before research provided the Salk vaccine.

## ***Who Are Mentally Retarded Persons?***

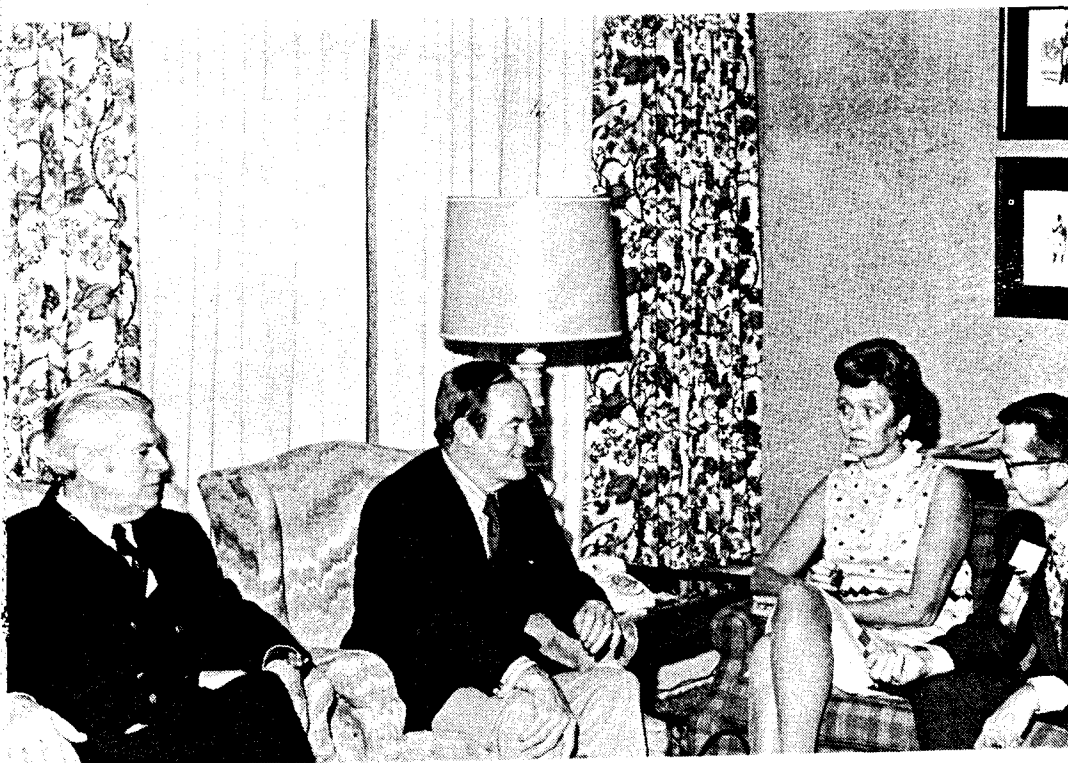
They are of every race, religion and nationality, every educational, social and economic background. Mental retardation crosses every line, to affect an estimated 6 million-plus Americans.

## ***Where Are They?***

They are among the neighbors and townspeople in the small towns, big cities and farms of all fifty states. With the growth of educational and training services for retarded persons, it is now possible for the great majority to live at home and take part in the community. A small group (approximately 4%) are in institutions, residential schools and hospitals.

## ***What Is Their Future?***

Of America's estimated 6.1 million mentally retarded persons, 2.4 million are children and young people under 21 years of age.



*Key NARC officers discuss projected goals in the prevention of mental retardation with the Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey.*

Over 2.1 million of these children are mildly retarded. Although limited in their potentials for traditional academic achievement, the vast majority can be brought by special education techniques to a state of self-sufficiency as adults.

Over 144,000 youths are estimated to fall into the moderately retarded category. Their intellectual development may be conceptualized as less than half that of intellectually average persons. Nevertheless, moderately retarded persons can learn to care for their personal needs and perform productive work at home or in sheltered working situations.

Severely retarded persons below 21 years of age number over 84,000. These youths can learn self care and the basic social adaptive skills, but their potential for economic productivity is limited.

The profoundly retarded also respond to training in basic self care and profit from special training in the areas of behavioral control, self protection, language development and physical mobility. In this lowest range, there are only about 36,000 children.

A similar distribution applies in the case of more than 3.7 million mentally retarded adults.

# ***What Causes Mental Retardation?***

Mental retardation can be caused by any condition that hinders or interferes with development before birth, during birth or in the early childhood years. Well over 200 causes have already been identified, although these causes account for only about one-fourth of all known cases of mental retardation.

**Genetic Irregularities** — These result from the abnormality of genes inherited from the mother and father, or from disorders of the genes caused during pregnancy by over-exposure to X-rays, infections and other causes.

**During Pregnancy** — Malnutrition, German measles, glandular disorders and many other illnesses of the mother during pregnancy frequently result in a child being born retarded. Lack of development of the brain before birth cannot be overcome after birth.

**At Birth** — Extraordinarily prolonged labor, pelvic pressure, hemorrhages — any birth condition of unusual stress — may injure the infant brain. Any circumstance that reduces the supply of oxygen to the infant's brain during birth may impair the baby's mental development.

**After Birth** — Childhood diseases like whooping cough, chicken pox, measles, meningitis, scarlet fever, encephalitis and polio can affect the brain, especially in the very young child. Glandular imbalance or malnutrition may prevent normal growth. Accidents — a blow on the head, for example — may damage brain tissue. Lack of certain chemicals in the blood which prevent the child from normally digesting his food causes brain damage and resulting retardation. Substances such as lead and mercury produce irreparable damage to the brain and nervous system.

**Environmental Factors** — Data published by the President's Committee on Mental Retardation suggests that some seventy-five percent of our nation's mentally retarded citizens come from urban and rural poverty areas. In addition to malnutrition, lead poisoning, disease-producing conditions and other health hazards associated with poverty situations, children in disadvantaged areas simply are not ex-



*NARC is an active co-sponsor of "Project STAR," an interagency program aimed at reaching low income families of retarded persons. Purpose of the project is to guide such families toward the full use of available community resources, to assist agencies in their work with low income populations, and to serve as a bridge between families and community agencies.*

posed to the most common day-to-day experiences of more fortunate youngsters. Research now indicates that such understimulation can result in irreparable damage, and can serve as a cause of mental retardation.

## ***Can Mental Retardation Be Prevented?***

We know how to prevent many cases now. Today, through special diets, we can prevent mental retardation caused by lack of certain blood chemicals, and current research in genetic engineering is pointing out ways to overcome other metabolic "errors" of this nature. Measles encephalitis, which often results in mental retardation, now is prevented by vaccination against measles. Through surgery, spina bifida, hydrocephalus and other structural defects can be alleviated in many cases. A vaccination to protect pregnant women against German measles (rubella) and prevent fetal brain damage is now widely available.

A desensitizing serum for mothers, or blood transfusions at birth, arrest the danger which threat-

ens children of parents with incompatible blood types — the RH factor for which all expectant mothers should be tested early in pregnancy. Avoidance of unnecessary X-rays during pregnancy is another precaution against retardation. Cautious use of any drug during pregnancy reduces the hazard of damage to the developing fetus.

Better pediatric care, including antibiotics that control the high fever formerly associated with many of the dangerous children's diseases, also works to limit mental retardation.

The goal of research in this field is not based on hope alone — it is foreseeable.

## ***What Can Be Done For Mentally Retarded Children And Adults?***

First of all, we should remember that **retarded children and adults resemble normal persons more than they differ from them**. All have the same need for love, understanding, acceptance; all need a chance to grow and develop to capacity. All **can** develop, but at different rates and to different levels.

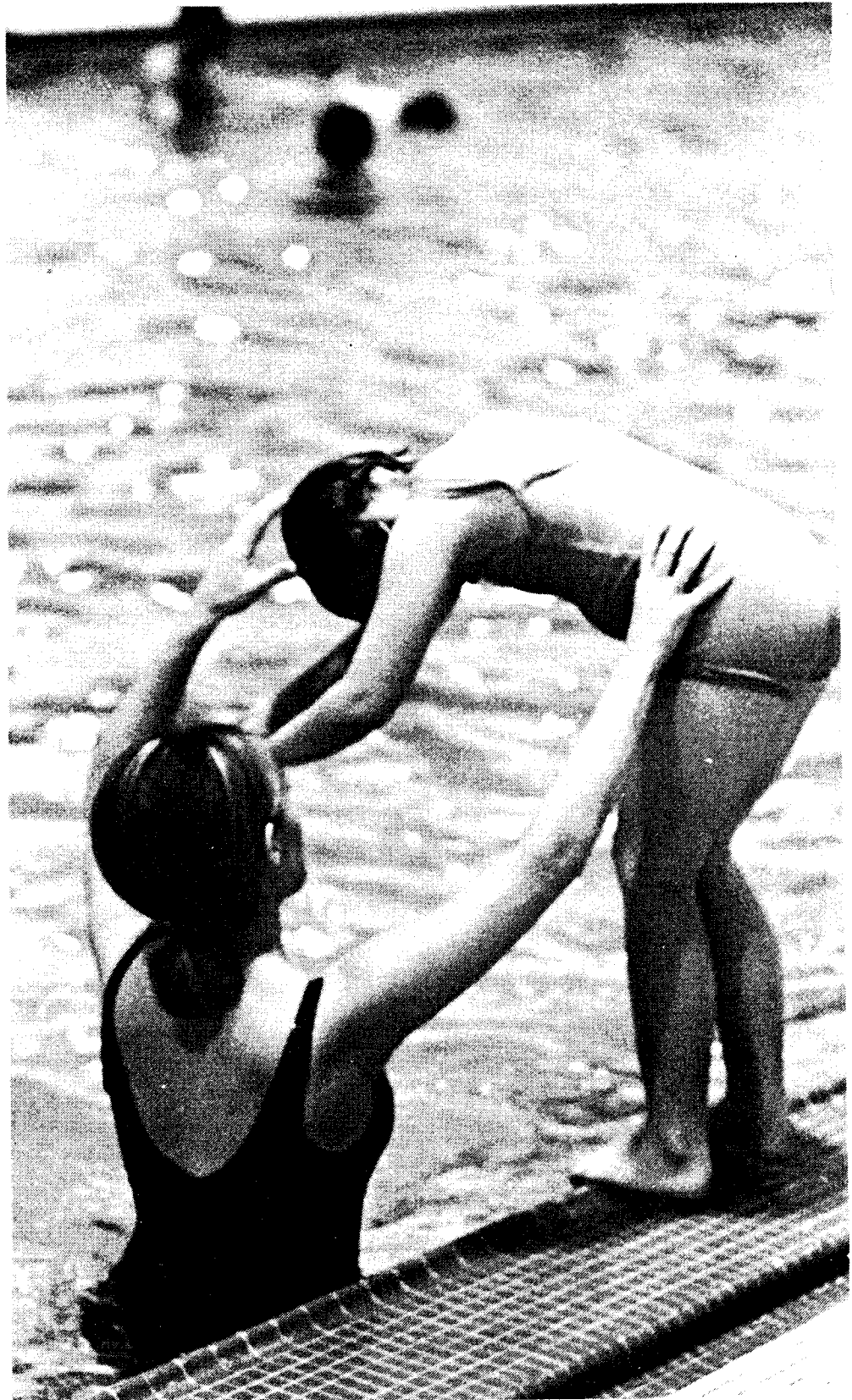
Even among persons of "average" ability and performance, there is wide variation. Mentally retarded individuals, given an opportunity and the encouragement to learn, achieve far more than was formerly believed possible.

## ***How Can We Best Help All Retarded Individuals?***

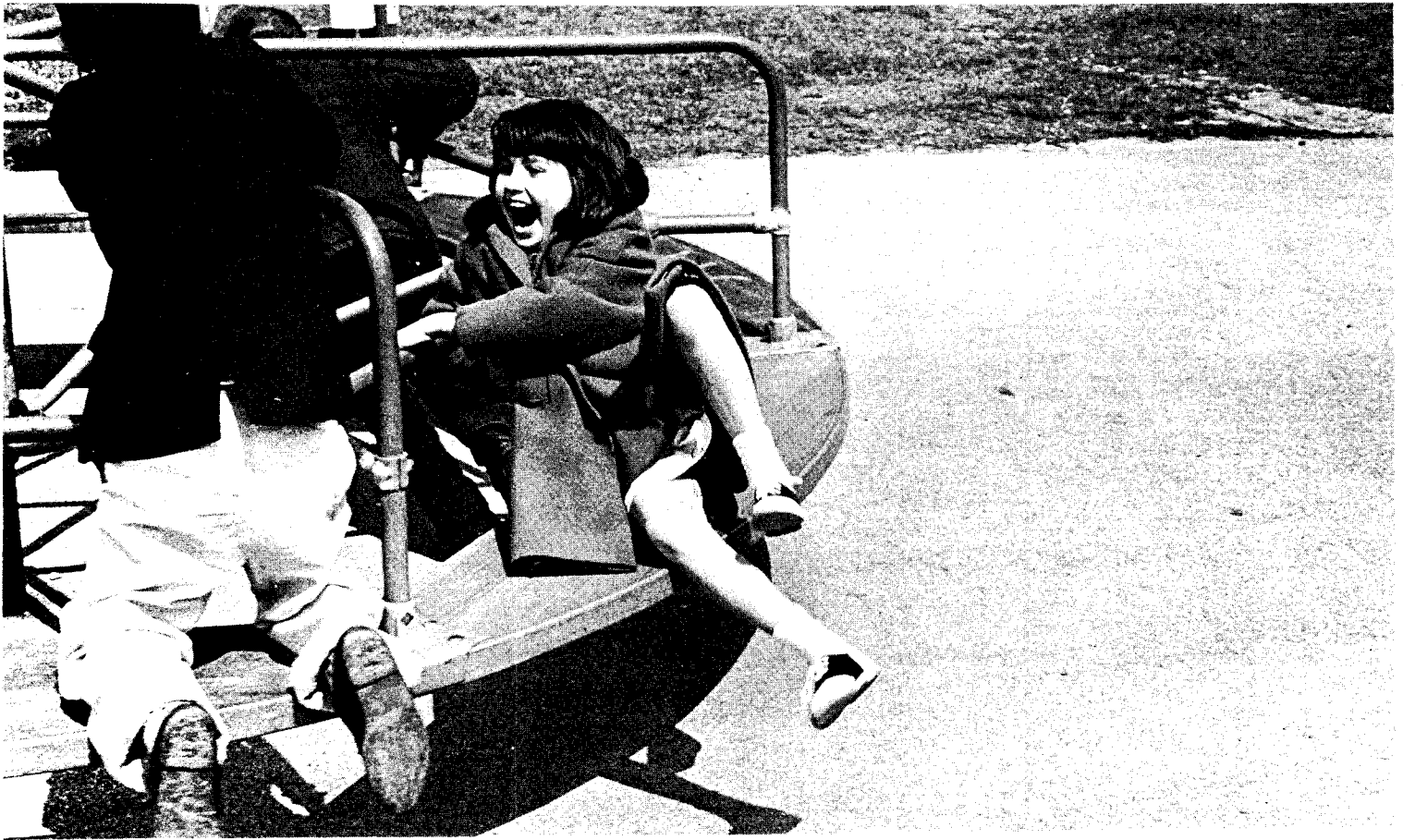
The mentally retarded require a helping hand, particularly in early life, to develop into useful, contributing men and women. There is no single formula for aiding the retarded; specific needs vary from one individual to another, and from time to time.

Because each person is different, and because family situations vary, the National Association for

Retarded Children has drawn up a **comprehensive program** designed to meet and harmonize the **total** needs of all of the mentally retarded, their parents and society.



*Recreation activities for the mentally retarded serve an important dual purpose. Learning an athletic skill such as swimming gives participants a sense of pride and confidence, and opens the door for increased opportunities for social involvement.*



*Pre-school classes prepare mentally retarded youngsters for further educational opportunities, and give them a chance to take part in group activities.*

## ***What Should A Comprehensive Program Include?***

**1. Community Diagnostic-Treatment Clinics** staffed with professional counselors, educators, nurses, social workers, psychologists, physicians and therapists. Since it is important to diagnose the child's condition accurately and to begin outlining an educative or treatment plan as soon as possible, there should be clinics adequately staffed to take care of all families that need help throughout the nation.

**2. Home Visit Programs** to help parents in the care and training of their retarded child at home.

**3. Parent Counseling** to help families understand mental retardation, and to foster happy and realistic relationships between the retarded individual, the family, their friends and the community.

**4. Day Training Services** for the severely and profoundly retarded, to provide the education so essential to appropriate development and to provide some respite for mothers from the burdens of 24-hour care for the child and enable them to take care of necessary duties for the rest of the family.

**5. Pre-school Classes** — Like all children, the retarded benefit from playing with suitable playmates and learning how to get along with other people. Pre-school class training has prepared many retarded youngsters for school whose behavior otherwise would have been unacceptable.

**6. Special Education and Training Centers for Retarded Persons of All Ages** — The retarded need educational programs adjusted to their learning needs.

- Mildly retarded children can grow up to be economically and socially independent. They need a curriculum emphasizing preparation for jobs and the practical and concrete aspects of citizenship in the family and community. Continuing education services will help them adapt to life demands as they grow older.



*NARC's recently published "Policy Statements on the Education of Mentally Retarded Children" underscores the responsibility of the public school system to provide meaningful educational opportunities for all mentally retarded children.*

- The moderately retarded will need some supervision and partially sheltered living environments. They need training in self-care and how to live with others. Their curriculum should prepare them for productive employment in sheltered work situations. Some can be trained successfully for independent employment.

- The severely and profoundly retarded can also profit from a curriculum designed to facilitate their acquisition of basic social adaptive skills. Such programs should be coordinated with home training provided by parents with the aid of skilled advisors.

**7. Religious Education** to provide spiritual development. Programs carried on by all major faiths in many communities evidence the ability of the mentally retarded to attain spiritual understanding.



*NARC actively participates in the Boy Scouts of America program for mentally retarded boys. The Association believes Scouting helps create a sense of accomplishment, and fosters the development of useful skills — two factors essential to a mentally retarded youngster's early years.*

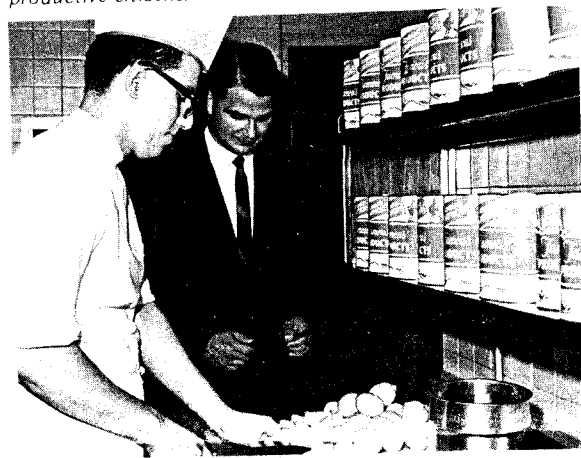
**8. Recreation Facilities** where the retarded can take part in Scouting, sports, teen canteens and clubs, and enjoy hobbies, parties, music and dancing.

**9. Vocational Services and Training Programs for Retarded Adults** — Just as education for retarded children must fit the needs of mentally retarded persons, having broadly varying intellect, training and employment services for adults must suit the diverse needs of individuals with widely ranging degrees of ability and social maturity.

There are more than 3.7 million retarded persons of working age in the United States . . . and more are added to this group every year. Vocational services for the retarded therefore grow increasingly important to the nation's economy. A comprehensive program should include:

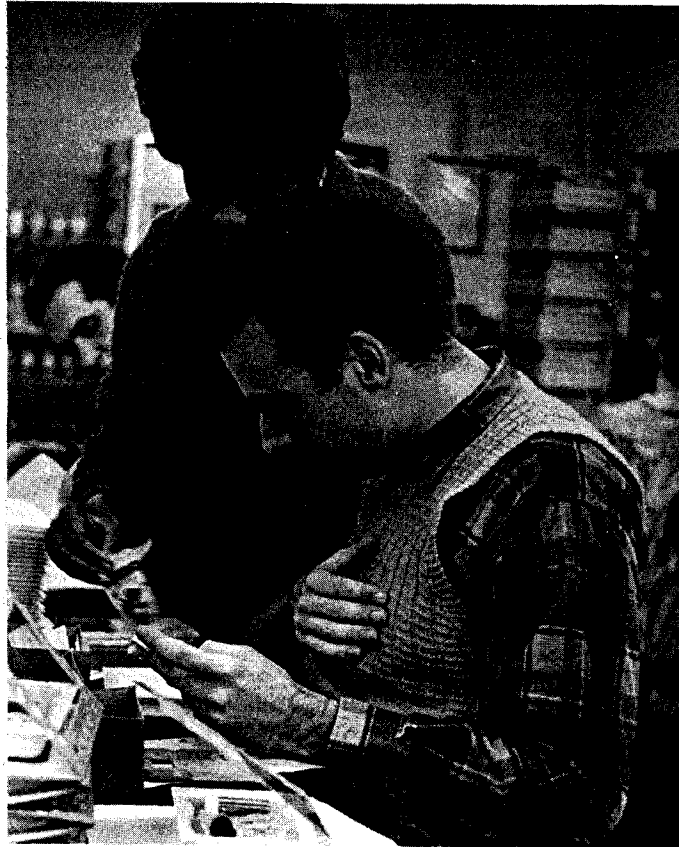
- Occupational information, job placement and follow-up services for the vast majority of retarded

*Through its On-the-Job Training Project, NARC has continued its efforts to foster increased employment opportunities for mentally retarded men and women. With proper education and training, the vast majority of the nation's mentally retarded could become self-supporting, productive citizens.*



persons capable of holding jobs and participating in community life.

- Vocational training and sheltered workshops for those who require special training in order to prepare for jobs, and for the person who can work under sheltered conditions but cannot hold jobs in competitive employment.



*Sheltered workshops provide job opportunities for mentally retarded citizens with special needs.*

- Activity centers with pre-vocational programs for retarded individuals not yet capable of consistent work even under sheltered workshop conditions. They require a program of activities to help further their social maturity and make constructive use of leisure time.

**10. Independent Living Centers** to serve as evaluation and living centers for mentally retarded persons in the community.

**11. Residential Facilities** — Some retarded children need temporary care away from home; some may require it for extended periods during their lives. Such centers should offer normal surroundings, skilled and understanding professional workers, and foster those behaviors that maximize human qualities, increase the complexity of residents' behavior, and enhance their ability to cope with cultural demands. They should be designed to help as many retarded children and adults as possible to ultimately live in the community and make their own way.

Even if a facility is state- rather than community-supported, an active interest on the part of community groups is virtually mandatory.

**12. Half-Way Houses** to prepare the retarded individual who is leaving an institution to return home, or who is preparing for his first experience in living independently.

**13. Citizen Advocacy** — Mature, competent citizen volunteers are needed to act for mentally retarded persons in many important areas. Formal advocacy would include traditional models of protective services, such as guardianship, while many thousands of other advocates are needed to serve as friends and advisors who will vigorously support



*The redirected NARC research program will focus upon such operational programmatic issues as the relative effectiveness of various approaches to educating the mentally retarded.*

and safeguard the rights of all our retarded citizens.

**14. Continuing Research** — Mental retardation is a

complex condition requiring varied techniques of prevention and habilitation. The keys to its secrets lie in laboratories, in clinics, in classrooms — in the purposeful research of dedicated biomedical and behavioral scientists in such areas as biochemistry, embryology, epidemiology, neurology, psychology, education, rehabilitation and sociology.

## ***What Is The National Association For Retarded Children?***

Inspired originally by the parents of retarded children in all parts of the country, the National Association for Retarded Children (NARC) is a voluntary nationwide organization devoted to improving the welfare of mentally retarded persons.

NARC seeks to aid all mentally retarded persons without regard to race, creed, geographical location or degree of retardation. It provides help to parents, individuals, organizations and communities in jointly solving the problems caused by retardation. NARC now has over 1,500 local and State Member Units in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and in U.S. territories and military installations abroad. It works with comparable organizations in other countries.

Its membership consists of over 224,000 parents and friends of the retarded, professional workers in the field of mental retardation and interested citizens. They are united by a common determination to see that every child and adult has a chance to develop to his fullest potential. They share a common resolution to stamp out the disability of mental retardation.

YOUTH-NARC, the national volunteer youth movement organized in 1967, includes in excess of 15,000 young persons between the ages of 13 and 25 years who are involved in providing services to mentally retarded persons, assisting in creating community awareness and understanding and acquiring first-hand knowledge of career opportunities in the field.



*Members of YOUTH-NARC establish valuable, personal relationships with mentally retarded children.*

## *COMMUNITY LEVEL*

On the community level, local NARC units attempt to obtain services for the retarded, ranging from special classes and pre-school programs to sheltered workshops and recreation. Their goal is to promote the comprehensive community program described earlier.

State ARC units work for legislation affecting education and other areas of care for the retarded,

and lead the way in coordinating and explaining local programs and facilities to parents, friends and the general public.

Nationally, NARC promotes the welfare of all mentally retarded persons by:

- ...Fostering the advancement of new and innovative approaches to research and ameliorative services.

- ...Creating increased public awareness of the needs and potential of the mentally retarded, telling the story through press, radio, television, films and speeches, working with professional, religious, civic, fraternal and other groups.

- ...Working with governmental agencies and the Congress, representing the rights of the mentally retarded.

- ...Fostering progressive legislation, emphasizing full and proper implementation of existing legislation and encouraging maximum coordination and utilization of resources.

- ...Developing materials and data to strengthen the programs of the local ARCs, working toward achievement of both immediate and far-reaching goals.

- ...Ensuring the right to education for all children by encouraging the development of appropriate teaching methods, curricula and standardization of teacher training and certification.

- ...Through public information and consultation, fostering the development of improved residential facilities characterized by excellence in program content, administration and consumer participation.

- ...Encouraging the employment of mentally retarded persons in the public and private sectors, and expansion of federal vocational rehabilitation services.

- ...Stimulating recruitment of teachers and other professional specialists for careers serving retarded persons.

- ...Participating in the development of standards for training, education and community life.

- ...Cooperating in exchanging new knowledge regarding mental retardation with international and foreign organizations working with retarded persons.

- ...Offering guidance to those who need help and those who want to help, reminding all concerned with human welfare that **the retarded can be helped.**



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN**

The Greater Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area

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